

The Citizen Forester

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What Could A Tree Steward Be Doing In Your Community?

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On November 2nd and 3rd thirty seven individuals from fifteen communities attended the annual Massachusetts Tree Steward Training Workshop at Harvard Forest (go to: <http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/>) in Petersham. For some it was an opportunity to refresh their skills and network with other communities, but for many it was their first venture into the burgeoning field of urban & community forestry. The Massachusetts Tree Steward Program (go to: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/urban/urbanBranch.htm>) is run by the Urban & Community Forestry Program in The Department of Conservation & Recreation and is an intensive two day workshop in the fall. Non-profits and community groups are encouraged to attend training with municipal staff to help foster a working partnership and understanding of each others goals and needs. Topics covered include: tree identification, proper pruning, planting, species and sight selection, insect & disease as well as tree inventories and developing a management plan. Guest speakers also cover related topic such as working with utility arborists, urban watershed issues and utilizing urban wood waste. Tree Stewards help form local tree committees and non-profit groups that work in cooperation with tree wardens to educate the public and local government officials on the importance of their community forests; they help to establish town tree planting programs, tree nurseries, ordinances and tree inventories.

The reasons people attend seem as varied as their backgrounds. Tree Wardens might attend to get the latest technical information on street tree inventory systems, insects & diseases or to find out more about establishing a citizen based tree group. Town managers and planners might be taking advantage of the condensed format that provides a comprehensive look into community forestry issues. Citizens tired of their community's dwindling resources attend in order to learn how to become more involved. What ever their reasons the tree steward training is designed to bring together the interdisciplinary fields of study needed to understand the complex social, economic and environmental interactions that govern the care and health of our community forests.

From Rhode Island to Alaska similar programs have been established to help draw attention to community forestry issues. Tree stewards are, for the most part, volunteers dedicated to improving the quality of life in their city or town by improving the health of their community forest. Tree stewards make a commitment to volunteer in their community by providing sweat equity to plant and care for new public shade trees and

many go on to promote public awareness of their community forest by creating educational programs. According to the U.S. Forest Service (go to: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/urban/index.shtm>) nationally tree stewards are active in over 11,000 communities volunteering an estimated 1.6 million hours of community service with each program tailored to meet it's regional needs.

An exemplary program outside of Massachusetts is the Vermont Tree Steward Program (go to: <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/soul/?Page=basicsoul.html>) sponsored by the VT Urban and Community Forestry Program and UVM Extension. Participants from all over Vermont attend a 40 hour training program called Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (S.O.U.L) designed for community volunteer group members, Tree Wardens, municipal officials and interested citizens. The program combines technical information on tree biology, tree assessment, municipal tree management, and proper maintenance practices with leadership skills needed to provide participants with tools to become better stewards and advocates for public shade trees. The program strives to bring residents together on a regional level to create a local knowledgeable and energized group of community tree and forests advocates. The VT program is also offered in conjunction with the Master Gardener College an advanced master gardener training course. Some of the projects S.O.U.L participants have undertaken include: conducting a community tree inventory, assisting with community tree plantings and working with or creating a tree board or volunteer tree group. Vermont now offers the S.O.U.L training program via Vermont Interactive Television which has seven locations around the state where participants meet for eight training classes.

The Rhode Island Tree Steward Program (go to: <http://www.ritree.org/index.html>) is sponsored by the RI Tree Council. Applicants attend six evening classes and two Saturday outdoor workshops. Curriculum delves into: tree biology, identification and sighting for new plantings and the importance of maintaining healthy soils and following proper planting, pruning and mulching techniques. Stewards also learn about diagnosis and treatment of common tree insect and disease problems, how to perform a tree inventory and how to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge to their community. Course graduates who also complete 30 hours of related public service to either their community or the RI Tree Council receive an achievement award as well as the Rhode Island Tree Steward Certification. Public service can be accomplished in many ways according to their interests and abilities. Many course graduates decide to fulfill their community service by organizing or assisting others with Arbor Day plantings or helping with Council activities such as the annual conference or seedling distribution program.

The New Hampshire Tree Steward Program (go to: <http://extension.unh.edu/forestry/FORCTS.htm>) is cosponsored by UNH Cooperative Extension and the NH Division of Forests and Lands, NH Fish and Game and the USDA Forest Service. Volunteers participate in a course that meets once a week for 11 weeks with optional field trips on Friday and are asked to volunteer 40 hours in their community. Some of the projects tree stewards have worked on are converting vacant lots into community parks and gardens, conduct street tree inventories, improving wildlife habitat, establishing greenways, protecting open space. In addition some teach other adults and youths, join local conservation commissions or help manage the NH Big Tree Program.

If your community needs a shot in the arm to boost its community forestry program consider contacting your State Urban & Community Forestry Program to find out how

you can be more involved. Margaret Mead said it right -- "*Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. In fact it is the only thing that ever has.*"

Picks and Shovels

For more information

Illinois Green Industry Association Guidelines for Growing, Installing and Maintaining Healthy Trees: www.ina-online.org/treespecsinstallation.htm excellent resource for specification and a step by step process for growing, planting and maintaining trees.

Friends of the Urban Forest: www.fuf.net/about_us/index.html is a non-profit group from San Francisco that has been providing financial, technical, and practical assistance to San Franciscans since 1981.

Reducing Storm Damage in Urban Forests: www.treelink.org/docs/KaneBrochure.pdf is a field guide that describes the forces of nature, drag, pressure center and bending moment and how the tree experiences the wind and thus how likely the tree failure is.

Growing Greener

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the U.S. Forest Service and the Mass Tree Wardens & Foresters Association (go to: <http://masstreewardens.org/Home.html>) another 15 communities will be growing greener after their tree wardens, municipal staff and citizen volunteers completed the annual two day Massachusetts Tree Steward Training program. Five Outstanding Citizen Forester Awards were presented to: Arline Slote-Davis of Lanesborough, Brian Breveleri of the City of Worcester Forestry Department, and Gretchen Folk, Dennis Pultinas and Ben Crouch of Earthworks Projects, Inc. of Boston. The "Outstanding Citizen Forester Award," is presented to citizens of the state who have demonstrated great personal effort to promote, protect and enhance our shared urban and community forest resource. In these endeavors, award recipients exhibit outstanding civic leadership and offer exemplary service to the citizens of their community and the Commonwealth. The Urban & Community Forestry Program would also like to give a special thanks to: Hadley Garden Center (go to: <http://www.hadleygardencenter.com/>) for donating the trees for the tree planting session, **Jamie Lewis of Extreme Landscape LLC in Bedford MA 781-275-0202** for sponsoring Sandra Libby and **Citizens-Union Savings Bank of Fall River** for sponsoring Aimee Marie Dufresne from the Fall River Street Tree Planting Program.

Growing on Trees

Applications being accepted for the Garden Club of America's Urban Forestry Fellowship Zone VI of The Garden Club of America has established a national fellowship in urban forestry for qualified U.S. students. The GCA Zone VI Fellowship in Urban Forestry will be awarded in early 2008. With this fellowship, The Garden Club of

America seeks to forward their goal of advancing our knowledge of urban forests and increasing the number of scientists in the field of urban forestry. Applications are reviewed by a selection committee at Virginia Tech composed of practicing urban forestry scientists and professionals in related fields. Final selection is endorsed by The Garden Club of America. Eligibility: The fellowship is open to both advanced undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in urban forestry, forestry, horticulture, environmental studies or a closely related field at any 4-year college or university degree program in the United States. Recipients must be U.S. students who will be enrolled as juniors or seniors or graduate students during the fellowship period. The award is for \$4,000 and recipients may apply for one additional year of funding. Application Process: For more information, online application forms, and past recipients, visit <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/urbanforestry/scholarships.htm> or contact Dr. Day at gcaurbanforestry@vt.edu or 540-231-7264. Application deadline: January 31.

Donate to plant trees in the Bay State!

The Mass ReLeaf Trust is a fund within the Conservation Trust of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) designed to foster partnerships between business, government, and nonprofit groups for the planting and care of public trees to improve our community environments and overall quality of life. Funding is actively sought from public and private sources for the Mass ReLeaf fund. The Mass ReLeaf fund is managed by the DCR's Urban and Community Forestry Program. All funds held in the Trust are distributed through urban forestry grants to municipalities and not for profits working in our communities to plant and care for public shade trees. If you would like to donate to the Trust, please send a check made out to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (with a notation for Mass ReLeaf) to DCR, Attn: Eric Seaborn, 251 Causeway Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02114. Thanks for your support!

On The Horizon

New England Wild Flower Society's AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE FLORA OF THE NORTHEAST Sunday, December 2, 2–3:30 p.m. Garden in the Woods, Framingham, MA Course Code: BOT2405 Join botanist Dennis Magee for a lecture about his collaboration with the late Harry Ahles to produce the newly released *Flora of the Northeast* (2nd edition), the most recent comprehensive regional flora to be published in the United States. www.newfs.org

UMass Extension Winter Botany – Identification of Plant Materials

December 13, 2007, 10 – noon Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston, MA
Learn the basics of plant identification, including terminology and the use of a dichotomous key, using a lecture/slide presentation as well as hands-on practice. Participants will learn characteristics of important landscape trees and will key out several examples of common trees in the landscape. Weather permitting; a walk through the landscape will follow. Cost is \$50, space is limited. ISA, MCA, MCH, and SAF credits have been requested. For more information or a registration form, go to www.umassgreeninfo.org or contact the Landscape, Nursery, & Urban Forestry Program at (413)545-0895, eweeks@umext.umass.edu.

The Society of Municipal Arborists 2008 Municipal Forester Institute: February 24-29, 2008 Registration Deadline November 1, 2007 or until full at the T-Bar-M Conference Center New Braunfels, Texas. A team of dedicated urban forestry professionals from across North America will help you gain insights into how you can move from a good urban forestry program to a great one. For more information go to www.urban-forestry.com or contact the SMA at 706-769-7412.

Species Spotlight

Carya ovata

Shagbark Hickory

Hardiness Zone 4

Edible Tree Fruit (see special section below)

General Description: Native from Quebec and southwest to Texas this large deciduous tree will grow up to 80' tall often with a straight central leader and about two-thirds as wide with branches ascending and descending forming a cylindrical shape. Leaves are alternately arranged with odd pinnately compound leaflets up to 7" long with 5 sometimes 7 leaflets, each 4" to 6" long and about 2" wide leaflets are elliptical in shape with serrated leaf margins. Leaf color is deep yellow green in summer turning yellow to golden in fall. Flowers are not considered ornamentally important. Fruit is a rounded nut 1" tp 1.5 " in diameter with a thick shell surrounding it that splits at the base when mature. Bark is gray brown in color with old bark forming strongly re-curved plates as if peeling away from the trunk yet attached in the center.



Culture: Prefers full sun to partial shade and deep well drained soil, often forms a large tap root which makes transplanting difficult best if propagated by seed.

Landscape Use: Edible fruit, interesting bark, excellent fall color and good for naturalized areas

Liabilities: Fruit can present maintenance problems so avoid planting near patios parking lots or other similar high use areas.

Cultivars/Varieties: None

For more information, see www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/j/jugnig/jugnig1.html

Edible Tree Fruit: is provided by Russ Cohen of the Mass Riverways Program, he is a professional environmentalist and wild foods enthusiast. To find out more about edible plants check out the following links. <http://users.rcn.com/eatwild/recipes.htm> ,



Shagbark hickory nuts ripen over a period of several weeks toward the tail end of September and into October. Look for trees in sunny spots along the edge of fields or country roads, as these will tend to bear more and bigger nuts than hickories shaded by other trees. Shagbark nut meats are enclosed in a smooth light tan shell about an inch long that is its self covered by a spherical, shiny-green, four part husk about 2 inches in diameter. The nuts don't usually fall off the tree until they' ripe, so no need to pick them directly off the tree. The four part husk splits away from the shell (or is easily pulled off by hand) after the nuts hit the ground. Un-ripened nuts can be placed in an unheated dry location like a garage to fully ripen. After several weeks you should be able to easily remove the husk. Although considerably thicker than their southern relative the pecan, shagbark hickory nut shells can still be cracked open with a conventional nutcracker. The nuts keep very well in their shells and as long as you keep them dry and relatively cool, they should not go bad even after a year or more in storage. Once you have shelled them however you should refrigerate or freeze those you don't eat within a few days. Taste a nut or two and you will discover they are delicious; well worth the time spent gathering and shelling them. Their flavor resembles store-bought walnuts with a touch of maple syrup. They are quite good raw, but are even better when incorporated into baked goods. Hickory nuts were a very popular food with northeastern Indian tribes. European botanists observed the natives crushing the shells with stones, and then putting everything (nut meats, shells and all) into mortars, where it would be mixed and pounded

with water. The result was then boiled to produce a milky soup or gruel the natives called “pocohickora” (hence the derivation of “hickory”). Hickories were also greatly appreciated by farm families and other rural folk, who gathered them by the bushel for their own use and for sale in produce markets.

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